Hovhannes Toumanian



THE DOG AND THE CAT



At one time, the Cat was a furrier;
And the Dog had no hat for his head,
But, I know not how, from somewhere,
He had managed to snatch a lambskin.

And one day, in the early winter,
He went to the Cat with this fur.

'Greetings to you, Master Cat;
My head feels cold: for the love of God,





Take this fur and sew for me
A cap that will fit me really well.
You can rest assured about the money,
Only, do not take long to finish it!'

'With great pleasure, Uncle Dog,
It is merely a cap you want, not a coat!
As a favour for your esteemed custom,
I will have it ready by Friday.





There is no need to talk about money;
That would be truly shameful between us!

And, Heavens above, it is no great thing,
Only the price of a cap and no more!'
So on the Friday, prior to the Cat,
Uncle Dog, with his head bare,





Looking serious and hasty of step,
Went and stood before the furrier's door:
'Where is the Master? Where is my cap?'
'He will soon be here, wait a little.'



II

Master Cat arrived wearing a fur coat;
He saw the Dog and under his whiskers
He muttered to himself a little
And then roared at the customer:



'Are you frost-bitten, impatient fellow,
Will you not let one breathe? You know,
It is no easy task: I have only just
Sprayed the fur with water, to sew it!'

'Well, bless my soul, say so then;
What are you getting so angry about?
I give you money to sew it up quickly,

If you can't do it, I'll come tomorrow!
Yon make a promise and don't keep it,
Then you raise your voice and shout at me!
It's all talk, talk, talk, talk:
How many more times am I to come and go?'
Thus spoke the Dog angrily
And departed, with his head still bare.

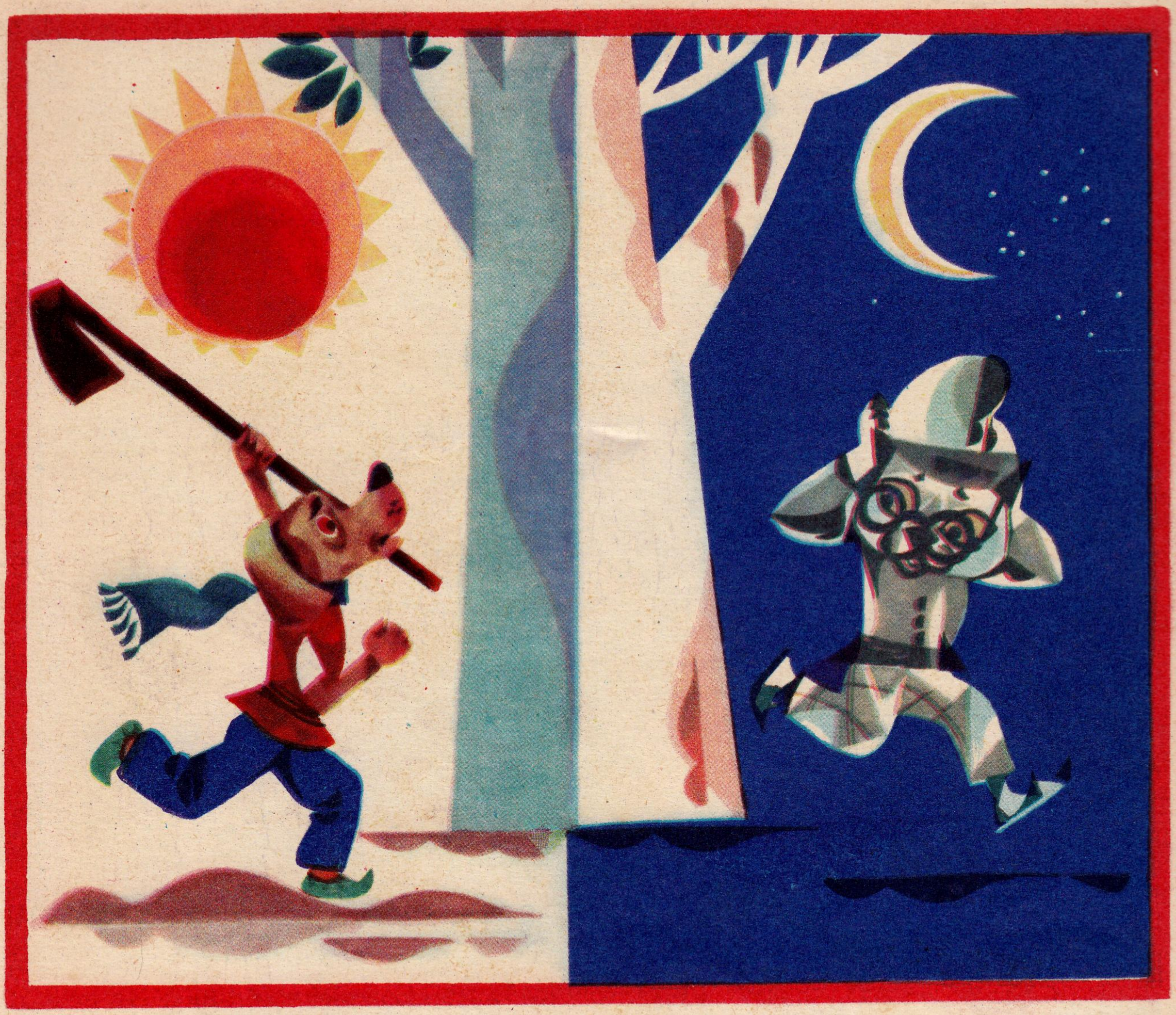




III

He called again and still it was not ready.
This time they swore at each other:
They used disgraceful and shamless words,
Like 'thieving Cat' and 'bald-headed Dog',

Cursed each other's parents and much else,
And the affair ended before the judge.
By the time the Dog had gone back and forth,
Master Cat was reduced to bankruptcy,
And one night, he decided to run away,
And disappeared right out of sight..!



IV

And from then on, to this very day,
The Dog has not forgotten his claim
And still remembers this incident:
Whenever he comes across the Cat,

He leaps up and chases after him
Demanding back his fur.
Whilst the impudent Cat suddenly
Swings round and angrily
Spits at the Dog, as if to say,
'I have just sprayed it, to sew it!'



Illustrations by

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